

ied on the island.

In 1985, the wreck of the *Dresden* was declared a National Monument. Recently, naval divers recovered the bell of the *Dresden* from Cumberland Bay, an event carried out by specialized personnel of the Armada, in agreement with the German government. The recovered bell (31.5 inches diameter) was shown to a group including the cultural attaché of the German Embassy. The bell will stay at least two years in the Museo Naval undergoing treatments to avoid further deterioration after spending 91 years at 65 meters down in the ocean.

*El Mercurio de Valparaíso, March 1, 2006*

## WHAT'S NEW IN HANGAROA

SURELY THE BIG NEWS ON THE ISLAND concerns the appointment of Melania Carolina Hotus Hey as governor of Rapa Nui. She was selected by Chile's recently elected president, Michelle Bachelet, and replaces outgoing Governor, Enrique Pakarati Ika. Madame Governor is the first woman to hold this position on the island although she has a long history of social work as the director of the Chilean National Organization for the Progress of Women, and the director of the island's Centro Juvenil. She is deeply committed to social and educational progress of the island and to the personal development of the island's youth. We send our congratulations and best wishes.

THIS LAST SUMMER was a busy one on Rapa Nui if the numbers of tourists even come close that of last year's head count of fifty thousand tourists. In December 2005, there were eight flights to the island each week (daily, plus 2 on Wednesday). Tapati festival drew a crowd, and the new queen of Tapati for 2006 is Tami Rapu Atan; runner-up is Vai a Heva Ika Riro-roko. Next year's Tapati festival will be held from 1-17 February 2007.

A NEW 60-TON ROUGH-TERRAIN CRANE was sent to the island from Tadano Ltd., Japan. Tadano presented the crane to Chile ambassador, Daniel Carvallo. Aside from the cost of the crane (\$500,000), Tadano also paid for shipping it to the island, free product support, and instructors to train operators. It was brought ashore at 'Anakena's beach by a special landing ship of the Chilean Navy. Tadano supplied the first crane to the island, brought in 1992. That 50-ton crane was used to set up the statues at Tongariki. However, it was damaged by severe weather and salt water. The new crane has anti-corrosion paint.

EASTER ISLAND CONTINUES to be under pressure from various schemes to "improve" the place. New hotels are continually being proposed and more vehicles continue to arrive. But already there are eight hotels on the island and some 2000 beds for tourists. And now a new scheme has been proposed for the island: a hotel at the pristine beach of Ovahe. <http://www.iorana.net/noticias.htm>

THE OLD RATTY SECTION OF THE HANGAROA HOTEL will be destroyed and a new one built. A three-story building with 200 beds is planned to replace the original structure. A high wall is to be built around the entire property and there will be a reception, spa, sauna, pool, aquarium, and convention rooms. There goes the neighborhood.

WHILE TOURISM BRINGS MONEY into the local economy (91% of the economy is based upon tourism), there are negative consequences due to lack of tourism management. In February, three giant cruise ships arrived on the same day, each disgorging hundreds of tourists who were rushed around the island via buses and then back to the ships. Sites and facilities are stressed, as is local transport. It becomes a mob scene.

The office of tourism on the island requested that an environmental impact study be conducted before beginning construction on the new and upscale Explora hotel, to be built outside the village. The local government skipped this procedure despite the fact that no one knows where the water for the hotel will come from. It will have to be pumped up, and brought across the landscape via pipes.

OUR SOURCES estimate that there are now more Chileans than Rapanui living on the island. They are making and selling woodcarvings, driving taxis, tour guiding, etc., whatever they can to make money, while the Rapanui struggle to get by. The woodcarving market is saturated and many tourists buy the cheaper (and inferior) carvings made by Chileans. Rapanui islanders want to restrict the influx of Chileans coming from the mainland to live on the island, but unless the constitution of Chile is changed, there is no way to stop them. Each flight brings more settlers to the island.



A photographic exhibition by Pavel Pavel was held at the Museo Sebastián Englert. Shown here at the opening of the exhibit (left to right) are Enrique Pakarati, Pavel, Museum Director, Francisco Torres, and the Ambassador from the Czech Republic, Lubomir Hladik and his wife, Eva Hladikova. The event celebrated twenty years since Pavel conducted experiments on moving the *moai*.

IN SPANISH, the AIDS acronym comes out as SIDA. The Chilean Ministry of Health has a subgroup called SIDACION and they sent representatives to Easter Island for three days of lectures, condom demonstrations, etc. However, only about 30 people showed up.

*El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 1 February 2006.*

OWING TO CUTS IN ELECTRICAL ENERGY, residents in Hanga-roa are experiencing blackouts, some lasting as long as three hours. These have been happening for more than a year and causing problems, particularly in relation to tourism. According to the head of Sasipa (the electric company of the island), Gerardo Velasco, an increase in tourism has caused an enormous expenditure of money on electric devices and other equipment that islanders did not have previously, such as washing machines, driers, TVs, DVD players, and air conditioning – things that hotel clients have requested. And also, many activities take place at night. Some hoteliers have bought stand-by generators. Electricity is very expensive and locals are angry. The island's mayor, Petero Edmunds, blamed Sasipa's head, Gerardo Velasco, for not fixing the problem. "It's very serious ... and he is not able to say that this is due just to increased tourism; that seems to me an infantile response. I attribute [the problem] to an archaic administration that has not kept up with the times."

*El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 22 February, 2006*

THE GLASSY-WINGED SHARPSHOOTER, called "*chicharrita de las cristalinas*" (*Homalodisca coagulata*) in Chile, has found its way to Easter Island, arriving on some produce from Tahiti and sending shock waves through vineyard owners on Chile mainland as the insect is notorious for killing grape vines. The forces of SAG (*Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero*) have fumigated between 60% and 70% of Hanga Roa village and "sticky cards" were placed around the island to indicate the distribution of the insect. Quarantine has been placed on all types of vegetation. SAG is studying biological ways to control the insect, involving the introduction of a natural predator of the *chicharrita*, another insect called "*Gonatocerus*." However, they worry about such an introduction. The *chicharritas* secrete sticky urine so that large concentrations of the insect in urban areas creates problems for people; this has been one of the main dilemmas in Tahiti.

*El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 22 February, 2006*

AFTER 86 YEARS, A MOAI IS BEING RETURNED. A statue was removed from Easter Island in 1927 and then traveled from Chile to Argentina in 1970. Originally from Hanga-roa, it was a gift to the then-Chilean president, Carlos Ibáñez del Campo. From the photo shown in papers, it is a modern carving. It has a huge schnozz and looks like Jimmy Durante.

*El Mercurio de Valparaíso, April 10, 2006*

## ENDURING RAPA NUI: THE 2005 MARATHON

BY SUSIE RUTHERFORD

THE RAPA NUI MARATHON OF 2005 was the grand finale of an action-packed weekend in June, usually a quiet time of year on the island. The winter weather was typically wet and windy but competitors, local and some not quite so, arrived to swim, bike, and/or run their way around Rapa Nui as part of a triathlon, mountain bike race, and marathon, all organized by Olimpo Productions of Santiago.

Events kicked off with the triathlon: a 400m sea swim,

20 km bike ride (5x4 km laps), and a 5 km run along the coast and back. A sizeable swell at the start of the swim created problems: the marker buoy drifted off-course and nearly capsized the rescue boat! However, once the buoy was repositioned and the rescue-boat rescued, competitors gathered at the starting point and, at the sound of a loud air-horn, all dashed into the sea.

Local athlete Alicia Ika was first woman out of the water, two minutes ahead of Megan Prinster, a Notre Dame student based in Santiago on a year- abroad study program. Prinster closed the gap on the bike and, slicing through gusting winds, finished 6 minutes clear of Ika in 1:12:53. Prinster admitted after the race that it was her first ocean swim, quite an initiation with 3ft+ waves causing difficulties for all!



Megan Prinster, a student at Notre Dame, comes ashore at the caleta after completing the swimming portion of the marathon.

In the men's race, first place was decided by an unfortunate crash. The leader of the pack, amidst shouting crowds and the slamming of brakes, was thrown off his bike and out of the race, fracturing an arm in the process. This opened the way for Omar Duran to cruise around the 5km run to win in 1:00:08, with Jorino Tuki in second (1:02:36), and Felipe Aviles of Santiago, third (1:04:15).

Overall winner of the sprint triathlon Omar Duran, was eight-time winner of the original Rapa Nui triathlon. The mountain bike race of the weekend started from Hanga Roa and climbed out towards 'Orongo, and then descended and continued towards Puna Pau and then off-road via Ahu Tepeu and the coastal road – a tough course. Islanders Jovino Tuki and Marisol Medina, both annual participants in the competition, held off the few challengers to win, completing the course in just over an hour.

The marathon was less complicated with a straight out-and-back route, but equally challenging. The sun came out for the morning start but moisture-laden clouds soon eclipsed the intense Pacific sun as the course looped around Hanga Roa and followed the road out towards 'Anakena. The weather took a turn for the worse and, for the last 10 km, rain came down in buckets. Many runners returned with blisters caused by waterlogged shoes.